

UPDATE -- Stem Cell Awareness Day Poetry Contest Winners Announced

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SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., October 6, 2010 —Eighteen entrants from six nations and six U.S. states rendered cinquain, rhyming and freeform poetry on the promise and provenance of stem cells and stem cell science in the 2010 Stem Cell Awareness Day poetry contest.

The motivation cited by one of the finalists matched the rationale for the contest originated by the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the state stem cell agency, in 2009. "Science and Technology are entwined with our lives," said Celia Berrell. "I believe that access to realistic information (that is not oversimplified for sensational effect) empowers us to realize how valuable stem cell research is, not just for its medical potential, but for our core understanding of the complexities of life."

This year's judges included the stem cell advocate who first suggested such a contest to CIRM, Don Reed. Reed is the sponsor of the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act that funds spinal cord research in California, founder and co-chair of Californians for Cures, vice president of public policy for Americans for Cures Foundation, and a part time poet and blogger. The second judge, Margaret Hermes, has an MA in poetry from Boston University and a PhD from Indiana University, and is a practicing poet and teacher. CIRM chief communications officer, Don Gibbons, who served as the third judge, also studied creative writing and poetry at Indiana (along with biology).

All four finalists will be given a framed stem cell image of their choice from CIRM's Flickr web site. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/cirm>

The winners were:

- Andy Levy for *Birth, Rebirth*
- Tyson Anderson for *Stem C.*

The finalists were:

- Celia Berrell for *Replanting Neurons*
- Kandy Bain for *The Stem Cell and the Scientist*

Updated October 8, 2010

CIRM recently announced two winners of the second annual poetry contest, one of which contained some religious language that is identical to liturgical language used in the context of Christian and Catholic sacraments. The language introduces a religious element that we now realize was offensive to some people.

We are deeply sorry for any offense caused by the poem. Neither the author nor CIRM intended for the language to insult or offend any religious group.

When CIRM recognized that the language was of concern we removed all four poems from the CIRM web site and from the Stem Cell Awareness Day web site.

About CIRM CIRM was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities

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